

# 1st Annual Marion-Polk Youth & Family Services Summit 2023

We think Governor John Kitzhaber said it best when referring to the partners who attended our first annual summit as “some of the most passionate and effective advocates for children, youth, and families in the state.” The Willamette Health Council is incredibly grateful to have partnered with Catholic Community Services and the Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub to bring nearly 200 community members together on February 1, 2023 to provide important feedback for advancing our collective work in service to children, youth and families.


We went into the summit with four goals in mind, and some hope that fun might be had along the way. Our goals included:

- 1 Highlight youth and family-centered work already happening within the community;**
- 2 Identify opportunities for stronger community alignment;**
- 3 Break down silos and reduce duplicative efforts; and**
- 4 Provide networking opportunities for local professionals, organizations, and community leaders.**

Before the day was over, it was obvious we were able to achieve these goals and so much more.

Photos by Kali Gradberg Photography





Four primary themes emerged from the input received throughout the summit panel discussions, workshops and table talks:

## Theme 1 Refocus on Prevention and Upstream Thinking

Governor Kitzhaber kicked off the event with discussion of the need for a prevention-focused approach to youth and family health, pointing to the increased success of upstream thinking. Many similar sentiments were reflected in workshops and during table talks throughout the day, highlighting the need for better support of basic human needs early in life to curb the ripple effect caused by the lack thereof.

## Theme 2 Center Youth and Families in Our Work

We heard that centering our work around the unique needs of each youth and family is both a priority for our community and something we look to continuously improve upon. During the Youth and Young Adult Panel, Backbone members described the importance of service providers partnering with them directly to help influence the types of services and supports they receive. Simply put, youth and families know what will work best for them. The Community Highlights Panel and breakout groups throughout the day echoed the importance of partnering with youth and families, while also considering the social determinants of health.

## Theme 3 Strengthen Personal and Community Connections

Attendees expressed a desire for more events like the summit, with time for connection, learning, and opportunities to act together. They want to see alignment between like organizations and the elimination of silos through unlikely partnerships. There was also an ask for continued work around resource sharing. A post-event survey showed that attendees wanted to see resources shared in three ways: 1) a physical space (i.e., resource center) that youth, families, and community partners can access in the community, 2) online, through a web-based platform that is easy to access and navigate, and 3) through one or more programs that community members trust and know they can go to for information.

## Theme 4 Leverage Our Community's Strengths

There was resounding appreciation and gratitude for the strong relationships, partnerships, and passion that already exist among all of us. Every community partner expressed commitment to continuous improvement, centering youth and families at the heart of the work and providing resources where they don't exist. Our community is resourceful and filled with the kindest of hearts. These are all strengths to be leveraged through our movement forward.



## What's Next?

The summit's organizing partners have each made three commitments to continuing the work started at the summit. Here's what we will be working on:

### *Willamette Health Council*

- Use learnings from the summit to:
  - Advance Marion-Polk System of Care strategic planning
  - Target future community investments
  - Sponsor new community trainings
- Report back on what was gleaned from summit participation
- Support future community convenings

### *Catholic Community Services*

- Take the excitement from the event and build on it by:
  - Advancing collective learning
  - Supporting new partnerships
  - Honoring lived experience as guiding wisdom
- Adopt a mindset of community abundance
- Convene more conversations throughout the community

### *Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub*

- Incorporate learnings from the summit into regional assessment, Raise Up Oregon community input, and current initiatives
- Continue to build on new and existing community relationships
- Support future community events focused on children and families



**For the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Marion-Polk Youth &  
Family Services Summit  
on March 7, 2024 at the  
Salem Convention Center!**

# Thank You to All Speakers, Panelists, & Summit Supporters!

*We could not have  
done this without you.*

Abby Warren | Polk County Family & Community Outreach  
Alisa Tobin | Community Action HOME Youth Services  
Amanda Foster | Northwest Human Services HOST  
Amanda Stephens | Polk County Behavioral Health  
Amber Calef | CASA of Polk County  
Ari Milroy | Backbone  
Benjamin Fennimore | Family Building Blocks  
Brooke Rizer | Portland State University System of Care Institute  
Chad Mann | Traditional Health Worker Collaborative & PacificSource Community Solutions  
Chase Burrell-Agnew | Backbone  
Chris Moore | Salem-Keizer School District  
Claudia Rodriguez | Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub  
Colleen Puentes | Interface Network  
Commissioner Jeremy Gordon | Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance  
Corissa Neufeldt | Marion County Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities  
Creighton Helms | Gervais School District  
Dennis Prescott | CASA of Marion County  
Domonique Daniel | Backbone  
Erica Chavez | Fostering Hope Initiative  
Erika Conjugacion | CP3  
Eva Pignotti | Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency  
Evelyn Nahoi | Backbone  
Governor John Kitzhaber  
Gretchen Bennett | City of Salem  
Holly Catalina | Oregon Department of Human Services  
Jay Hernández | WESD Migrant Education Program  
Jennifer Helms | Marion County Behavioral Health  
Jennifer Kubista | Central School District  
Jill Sorenson | Fostering Hope Initiative  
Jim Seymour | CBEL & Mountain West Investments  
Johnie Ferro | WESD Career Academy  
Josh Graves | Community Impact Network & Catholic Community Services  
Julie Conn-Johnson | McKinney-Vento  
Justin Hopkins | Willamette Health Council  
Kelly Martin | Suicide Prevention Coalition  
Kiara Yoder | Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub  
Kim Dwyer | Santiam Service Integration Team  
Kim Klotz | Santiam Hospital & Clinics  
Kim Parker-Llerenas | Willamette Workforce Partnership  
Kloi Spencer | Backbone  
Lara Barnes | Options Counseling & Family Services  
Levi Herrera-López | Mano a Mano  
Linda Mann | Capitol Dental Care  
Lisa Harnisch | Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub  
Lisa Parks | Traditional Health Worker Collaborative & Willamette Health Council  
Lorelle Gould | Oregon Department of Human Services  
Lynette Anderson | CASA of Polk County  
Margie Lowe | Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub  
Paige Gorman | Trillium Family Services  
Rhonda Rhodes | Salem-Keizer Public Schools  
Rick Gaupo | Marion Polk Food Share  
Sandy Bumpus | Oregon Family Support Network  
Sean Aker | Student Success Act & Willamette Education Service District  
Shanta Frisbee | Northwest Human Services HOST  
Sue Bloom | Boys & Girls Club  
Suzanne McClintick, MD | Childhood Health Associates of Salem  
Suzanne West | Salem-Keizer Public Schools  
Theo Garrison | Backbone  
Tia Barnes | Youth Era  
Tim Sinatra | Family YMCA of Marion & Polk Counties  
Tonya Coker | Willamette Education Service District  
Tricia Frizzell | Salem Health